Sonnets by John Keats

Addressed to Haydon

Highmindedness, a jealousy for good,
A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
Dwells here and there with people of no name,
In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:
And where we think the truth least understood,
Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"
That ought to frighten into hooded shame
A money mong'ling, pitiable brood.
How glorious this affection for the cause
Of stedfast genius, toiling gallantly!
What when a stout unbending champion awes
Envy, and Malice to their native sty?
Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

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As from the darkening gloom a silver dove

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,
On pinions that nought moves but pure delight,
So fled thy soul into the realms above,
Regions of peace and everlasting love;
Where happy spirits, crown'd with circlets bright
Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.
There thou or joinest the immortal quire
In melodies that even heaven fair
Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire,
Of the omnipotent Father, cleav'st the air
On holy message sent — What pleasure's higher?
Wherefore does any grief our joy impair?

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

Before he went to live with owls and bats

Before he went to live with owls and bats,
Nebuchadnezzar had an ugly dream,
Worse than a housewife's, when she thinks her cream
Made a naumachia for mice and rats:
So scared, he sent for that "good kind of cats,"
Young Daniel, who did straightway pluck the beam
From out his eye, and s`id – "I do not deem
Your sceptre worth a straw, your cushions old door mats."
A horrid nightmare, similar somewhat,
Of late has haunted a most valiant crew
Of loggerheads and chapmen; – we are told
That any Daniel, though he be a sot,
Can make their lying lips turn pale of hue,
By drawing out – "Ye are that head of gold!"

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven, the domain

Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven,–the domain
Of Cynthia,–the wide palace of the sun,–
The tent of Hesperus and all his train,–
The bosomer of clouds, gold, grey and dun.
Blue! 'Tis the life of waters–ocean
And all its vassal streams: pools numberless
May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can
Subside if not to dark-blue nativeness.
Blue! gentle cousin of the forest green,
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,
Forget-me-not,–the blue-bell,–and, that queen
Of secrecy, the violet: what strange powers
Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,
When in an Eye thou art alive with fate!

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

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Dedication To Leigh Hunt, Esq.

Glory and loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young, and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these,
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time, when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

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Happy is England! I could be content

Happy is England! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent:
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

How many bards gild the lapses of time!

How many bards gild the lapses of time!
A few of them have ever been the food
Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:
And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,
These will in throngs before my mind intrude:
But no confusion, no disturbance rude
Do they occasion; ’tis a pleasing chime.
So the unnumber’d sounds that evening store;
The songs of birds—the whisp’ring of the leaves—
The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves
With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,
That distance of recognizance bereaves,
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

Keen, fitful gusts are whisp’ring here and there

Keen, fitful gusts are whisp’ring here and there
Among the bushes half leafless, and dry;
The stars look very cold about the sky,
And I have many miles on foot to fare.
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
Or of the distance from home’s pleasant lair:
For I am brimfull of the friendliness
That in a little cottage I have found;
Of fair-hair’d Milton’s eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid drown’d;
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown’d.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies,
For more adornment, a full thousand years;
She took their cream of Beauty, fairest dyes,
And shaped and tinted her above all peers:
Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
And underneath their shadow filled her eyes
With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
Of high Olympus uttered slavish sighs.
When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
My heart took fire, and only burning pains…
They were my pleasures — they my Life's sad end;
Love poured her beauty into my warm veins. …

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O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

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Of late two dainties were before me plac'd

Of late two dainties were before me plac'd
Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,
From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent
That Gods might know my own particular taste.
First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,
The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
Sigh'd; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,
Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.
O Bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away–
O stranger thou my nerves from Pipe didst charm–
O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway–
Again thou Stranger gav'st me fresh alarm–
Alas! I could not choose. Ah! my poor heart,
Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve

Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far – far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
Fromm little cares; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into the delight my soul deceive.
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate – on Sydney's bier –
Till their stern forms before my mind arise:
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

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On Fame (Fame, like a wayward girl)

Fame, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;
She is a Gipsey,—will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content without her;
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her;
A very Gipsey is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;
Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for scorn;
Ye Artists lovelorn! madmen that ye are!
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

On Fame (How fever'd is the man)

«You cannot eat your cake and have it too.» – Proverb.

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
On the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom:
But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,
And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,
The undisturbed lake has crystal space;
Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer

Much have I travell’d in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow’d Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star’d at the Pacific—and all his men
Look’d at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

On Leaving Some Friends at an Early Hour

Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap’d up flowers, in regions clear, and far;
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when ’tis seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:
And let there glide by many a pearly car,
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,
And half discovered wings, and glances keen.
The while let music wander round my ears,
And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres:
For what a height my spirit is contending!
’Tis not content so soon to be alone.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

On Seeing the Elgin Marbles

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet ’tis a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning’s eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

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On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again

O golden tongued Romance, with serene lute!
Fair plumed Syren, Queen of far-away!
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute:
Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute
Betwixt damnation and impassion’d clay
Must I burn through; once more humbly assay
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.
Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,
Begetters of our deep eternal theme!
When through the old oak Forest I am gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream,
But when I am consumed in the fire,
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

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On the Grasshopper and Cricket

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

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On the Sonnet

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness;
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy;
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet:
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

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Sonnet on Peace

O Peace! and dost thou with thy presence bless
The dwellings of this war-surrounded Isle;
Soothing with placid brow our late distress,
Making the triple kingdom brightly smile?
Joyful I hail thy presence; and I hail
The sweet companions that await on thee;
Complete my joy let not my first wish fail,
Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be,
With England’s happiness proclaim Europa’s Liberty.
O Europe! let not sceptred tyrants see
That thou must shelter in thy former state;
Keep thy chains burst, and boldly say thou art free;
Give thy kings law leave not uncurbed the great ;
So with the horrors past thou’lt win thy happier fate!

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Sonnet to Byron

Byron! how sweetly sad thy melody!
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,
As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,
Had touch’d her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,
Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer’d them to die.
O’ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less
Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress
With a bright halo, shining beamily,
As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,
Its sides are ting’d with a resplendent glow,
Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,
And like fair veins in sable marble flow;
Still warble, dying swan! still tell the tale,
The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

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Sonnet to Chatterton

O Chatterton! how very sad thy fate!
Dear child of sorrow – son of misery!
How soon the film of death obscur'd that eye,
Whence Genius mildly flash'd, and high debate.
How soon that voice, majestic and elate,
Melted in dying numbers! Oh! how nigh
Was night to thy fair morning. Thou didst die
A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.
But this is past: thou art among the stars
Of highest Heaven: to the rolling spheres
Thou sweetly singest: naught thy hymning mars,
Above the ingrate world and human fears.
On earth the good man base detraction bars
From thy fair name, and waters it with tears.

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Sonnet to Spenser

Spenser! a jealous honourer of thine,
A forester deep in thy midmost trees,
Did last eve ask my promise to refine
Some English that might strive thine ear to please.
But Elfin Poet 'tis impossible
For an inhabitant of wintry earth
To rise like Phoebus with a golden quill
Fire-wing'd and make a morning in his mirth.
It is impossible to escape from toil
O' the sudden and receive thy spiriting:
The flower must drink the nature of the soil
Before it can put forth its blossoming:
Be with me in the summer days, and I
Will for thine honour and his pleasure try.

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This mortal body of a thousand days

This mortal body of a thousand days
Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom!
My pulse is warm with thine old barley-bree,
My head is light with pledging a great soul,
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,–
Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind,–
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,–
O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

To _. (Had I a man's fair form, then might my sighs …)

Had I a man's fair form, then might my sighs
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so well
Would passion arm me for the enterprise:
But ah! I am no knight whose foeman dies;
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell;
I am no happy shepherd of the dell
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.
Yet must I doat upon thee, — call thee sweet,
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honey'd roses
When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,
And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

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To a Friend Who Sent Me Some Roses

As late I rambled in the happy fields,
What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
From his lush clover covert;—when anew
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields:
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
A fresh-blown musk-rose; ’twas the first that threw
Its sweets upon the summer: graceful it grew
As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
I thought the garden-rose it far excell’d:
But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me
My sense with their deliciousness was spell’d:
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
Whisper’d of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquell’d.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

To Ailsa Rock

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl’s screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams!
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is ‘t since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sun-beams,
Or when gray clouds are thy cold cover-lid?
Thou answer’st not, for thou art dead asleep!
Thy life is but two dead eternities —
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies —
Drown’d wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

To G. A. W. (Georgiana Augusta Wylie)

Nymph of the downward smile, and sidelong glance,
In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? When gone far astray
Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting away,
With careless robe, to meet the morning ray,
Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest:
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
That I can never tell what mood is best.
I shall as soon pronounce which grace more neatly
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

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To Haydon with a Sonnet Written on seeing the Elgin Marbles

Haydon! Forgive me, that I cannot speak
Definitively on these mighty things;
Forgive me that I have not Eagle's wings—
That what I want I know not where to seek:
And think that I would not be over meek
In rolling out upfollow'd thunderings,
Even to the steep of Helciconian springs,
Were I of ample strength for such a freak—
Think too that all those numbers should be thine;
Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's hem?
For when men star'd at what was most divine
With browless idiotism—o'erwise phlegm—
Thou hadst beheld the Hesperean shine
Of their star in the East, and gone to worship them.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

To Kosciusko

Good Kosciusko, thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling;
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
And changed to harmonies, for ever stealing
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.
It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
To where the great God lives for evermore.

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To Mrs Reynolds's Cat

Cat! who hast passed thy grand climacteric,
How many mice and rats hast in thy days
Destroyed? How many tit-bits stolen? Gaze
With those bright languid segments green, and prick
Those velvet ears – but prithee do not stick
Thy latent talons in me, and up-raise
Thy gentle mew, and tell me all thy frays
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.
Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists –
For all thy wheezy asthma, and for all
Thy tail's tip is nicked off, and though the fists
Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,
Still is that fur as soft as when the lists
In youth thou enteredst on glass-bottled wall.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

To My Brother George

Many the wonders I this day have seen:
The sun, when first he kist away the tears
That fill'd the eyes of morn;—the laurel'd peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean;—
The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scantly, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.
But what, without the social thought of thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

To My Brothers

Small, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
That aye at fall of night our care condoles.
This is your birth-day Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.
Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys,—ere the great voice,
From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly.

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To one who has been long in city pent

To one who has been long in city pent,
’Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with hearts content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet’s bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E’en like the passage of an angel’s tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

To Sleep

O soft embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting with careful fingers and benign
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embower’d from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

Back to the list of John Keats’s sonnets →

To the Nile

Son of the old Moon-mountains African!
Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
We call thee fruitful, and that very while
A desert fills our seeing's inward span:
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile
Such men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?
O may dark fancies err! They surely do;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
The pleasant sunrise. Green isles hast thou too,
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

Back to the list of John Keats's sonnets →

Translated From A Sonnet Of Ronsard

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies
For more adornment a full thousand years;
She took their cream of Beauty's fairest dyes,
And shap'd and tinted her above all Peers:
Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
And underneath their shadow fill'd her eyes
With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
When from the Heavens I saw her first descend
My heart took fire, and only burning pains
They were my pleasures — they my Life's sad end;
Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins…

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Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition

The church bells toll a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More harkening to the sermon’s horrid sound.
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell; seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
And converse high of those with glory crown’d
Still, still they too, and I should feel a damp, –
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That ’tis their sighing, wailing ere they go
Into oblivion; – that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.

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Written On The Blank Space Of A Leaf At The End Of Chaucer’s Tale Of “The Flowre And The Lefe.”

This pleasant tale is like a little copse,
The honeyed lines so freshly interlace
To keep the reader in so sweet a place;
So that he here and there full-hearted stops;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face,
And by the wandering melody may trace
Which way the tender-leggéd linnet hops.
O what a charm hath white Simplicity!
What mighty power hath this gentle story!
I, that forever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

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Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison

What though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
In his immortal spirit, been as free
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?
Think you he nought but prison walls did see,
Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?
Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
With daring Milton through the fields of air:
To regions of his own his genius true
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

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